

Scoring for Range-Finding

- ◆ Range-finding: the process used to establish exemplar samples of writing for each grade level in each trait at each score point
- ◆ Anchor set: a set of papers made up of the exemplar papers in each score point for each trait resulting from range-finding

Arizona Department of Education's Assessment Section collaborates with the contracted test company to complete range-finding and establish anchor sets for all field test writing. The resulting, teacher-scored papers are used to train evaluators hired by the test company to score operational prompt writing results from AIMS DPA and AIMS HS. (See "Scoring for AIMS Writing on the AIMS Writing Page.) The following bulleted information represents the process teachers use for scoring the papers.

RUBRIC

- Look for the positive attribute of the writing first, and then note any weaknesses.
- Let the descriptor for each score point guide you initially.
- Match elements in the writing with the score point bullets.
- Not all bullets must be met.
- Writing identified at one score point may have elements represented by bullets in adjacent score points.
- Most elements satisfied indicate the score assignment.
- Score point 1 is not a dumping ground: support the score with elements from the writing that match the rubric.
- Score point 6 does not mean a perfect paper. A 6 is beyond grade level expectations (score point 4), has risk-taking, exhibits control, and is more sophisticated in skill.

SCORING

- Do not allow personal bias to affect your score.
- Do not allow length to indicate a low or high score.
- Do not allow student errors to overshadow student strengths.
- Off-mode papers are scored. As long as a paper is on topic, it is scored.
- Scoring vs. grading: keep in mind that the testing situation is a cold prompt, does not allow for teacher assistance, and is completed in a testing context.

ONE TRAIT

- Focus on one trait only.
- Begin at score point 4 first, then move up or down as the attributes of the paper dictate.
- Do not let skill or lack of skill in another trait bias your score in the trait you are scoring.

ANNOTATIONS

- Annotations give the evaluators insight about a paper and its score point in a trait.
- Annotations must be clear and directly related to the writing and the rubric.
- Annotations require specific support from both the paper and the rubric.

- Explaining why a paper is not the score point above or the score point below is extremely helpful for evaluators.
- Think: “If I didn’t know the Six Trait rubric and if I did not use it often in the classroom, would this annotation give me insight and understanding to score papers in this trait?”

Scoring appropriately depends on both the rubric and Strand 2 of the Writing Standard. Consulting the Arizona Articulated Writing Standard for grade level expectations in writing is part of the scoring process.

IDEAS & CONTENT

- Ideas clearly incorporate the student’s purpose and topic.
- Ideas and development are clear and focused.
- Ideas are supported with specific examples, explanations, or details.
- Presentation of ideas and support is appropriate for the audience.
- Development of the ideas may show insight.

ORGANIZATION

- Paper has a beginning, a middle, and an ending.
- Paper has an identifiable organizational structure.
- Organization is coherent and cohesive.
- Writer appropriately uses transitions and/or transitional devices.
- The paper is clearly sequenced from one idea or point to the next.
- The writer use creativity in the organization of his/her ideas.

VOICE

- Voice is appropriate to audience and purpose.
- Voice is appropriately formal or informal in tone.
- Voice chosen is maintained throughout the paper.
- Writer is engaged in and shows commitment to his/her topic.
- Writer interacts with and shows awareness of the reader.
- The writer brings a sense of individual self to the paper.
- Accept student voice without bias.

WORD CHOICE

- Grade level words and phrases used appropriately .
- Words and phrases that create images and impact the reader.
- Words offer a clear, coherent message.
- Varied word choice shows range of vocabulary knowledge .
- Colorful language is not overdone and fits the purpose.
- Use of clichés and slang adds to the message, not detracts from it.
- Experiments with language for effect.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

- Paper allows for expressive, smooth, oral reading.
- There is a natural flow and rhythm to the paper.
- Grade level control of sentence structure.
- Varied sentence patterns evidenced in beginnings and lengths.
- Sentence patterns and structures enhance meaning.
- Dialogue is natural and flows with the rest of the paper.
- Intentional, meaningful use of fragments.

CONVENTIONS

- Control and use of grade level conventions: punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar and usage.
- Appropriate use of internal and end-of-sentence punctuation.
- Spelling attempts of above grade level words are recognizable and do not interrupt the flow of the message.
- Paragraphing is used appropriately for clarity.
- Creative use of conventions to enhance message.
- An error is counted once, not each time it occurs.

Dispelling the Myths of AIMS Writing

A paper

- does **not** have to satisfy each bullet in a score point to earn that score point.
- does **not** have to have paragraphing to earn a 4, 5, or 6 in ANY trait.
- does **not** have to be two pages long to earn a 4 or above.
- does **not** have to be written in third person.
- does **not** have to be written as a five-paragraph essay to earn a 4 or above.
- does **not** have to be perfect to earn a 6.
- does **not** have to be on mode, but it does have to be on topic.

AIMS evaluators

- are college graduates; many are teachers or have been teachers.
- are trained specifically for Arizona scoring.
- are encouraged to thoroughly read each paper, multiple times if necessary, to score fairly.
- are caring people who like kids.